

Been Set Free: A Distributed Virtual Theatre Dance Performance

Joe Geigel, Zhongyuan Fa, Kimmy Goewey, Theodore Lincoln, Marla Schweppe, and Lin Welsh

Rochester Institute of Technology

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I. INTRODUCTION

For Frameless 2021, we present a fully realized example of virtual theatre. We define virtual theatre as a live theatrical performance, experienced on a stage in virtual reality, with participants in different physical locations (Geigel 2018).

For this performance, we present a dancing avatar, whose motions will be guided by a live performer outfitted with a full body motion capture system (Fig 1). Audience members will be able to watch the avatar perform on the virtual stage immersively using head mounted displays.



Fig. 1. Live dancer using motion capture to control an avatar on the virtual stage.

II. PHYSICAL SETUP

This Viewing stations equipped with Mixed Reality headsets for audience members will be set up in a classroom in MAGIC Spell Studio. Additional external audience stations will be set up at the University of Rochester's Studio X¹. The Studio X stations will not only provide the capability for off campus viewing of the performance but will serve as a proof of concept of the remote, distributed nature of these kinds of performances.

The MAGIC Spell Studios sound stage (Fig 2) will serve as the physical performance space for the human

dancer. The sound stage will be equipped with a large video wall which will be used to display the virtual auditorium from the perspective of the avatar on the virtual stage. Audience members will have their own "seat" in the virtual auditorium and will be represented by abstract futuristic heads which will move based on the head motion of the person viewing. This setup will place the live performer in the virtual environment and allow for interplay between the live performer in the physical space with audience members experiencing the performance in the virtual space.



Fig. 2. Video wall on the MAGIC soundstage that will serve as dancer's physical performance space.

The performance will last approximately 10 minutes leaving open the possibility of running the show twice during the symposium. The in-world experience will be closed captioned.

III. REFERENCES

Geigel, J. (2018), "Creating a theatrical experience on a virtual stage", *Advances in Computer Entertainment Technology*, pp. 713- 725, 2018.

¹ <https://studiox.lib.rochester.edu/>